

BILLERICAY

Rural District Council.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1898.

JANUARY, 1899.

CHELMSFORD :

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REPORT.

GENTLEMEN,

The following is my Report for the year 1898.

The Union consists of 25 parishes, with an area of 49,350 acres, and a population, according to the census of 1891, of 20,564. It is divided into two Registration Districts. The Wickford, which comprises the parishes of Basildon, North Benfleet, Bowers Gifford, Great Burstead, Downham, Laindon, and Lee Chapel, Nevendon, Pitsea, Ramsden Crays, Ramsden Bellhouse, Vange, and Wickford, with a population of 4,854. The Brentwood, which consists of the remaining parishes of the Union, with a population of 15,710.

The Union.

The number of births registered during the year was 459. Of these 319 were in the Brentwood District, 165 boys and 154 girls; and 140 in the Wickford District, 80 boys and 60 girls.

Births.

The number of deaths registered was 479. Of these 25 occurred in the Workhouse, 66 in the Wickford District, 173 in the Brentwood District, 211 in the Asylum, 2 in the Hackney School, and 2 in the Davenport Hill School.

Deaths.

These returns give a birth rate of 26·6 per thousand of population, and a death rate of 15·3 per thousand. In estimating this the various public institutions, with the exception of the Workhouse, are not included, and no allowance is made for any increase of population since the census of 1891.

Vital
Statistics.

The deaths of children under one year of age were, in the Brentwood District 39, and in the Wickford District 20.

Infantile Death
Rate.

Compared with the births, these deaths in children under one year of age show that in the Brentwood District the infant mortality was 122·2 per thousand of births, and in the Wickford District 142·8 per thousand. The two districts combined give a mortality of 123·5 per thousand. The mortality last year was 89·17 per thousand of births.

Deaths at
advanced age.

Of deaths at advanced age there were in the Brentwood District 30 between 70 and 80; 20 between 80 and 90, and 2 over 90, the oldest being 92. In the Wickford District there were 5 between 70 and 80, and 5 between 80 and 90, the oldest being 86.

The following tables will show the ages at which death occurred and the diseases causing death:—

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; Public Insti- tutions being shown as separate localities. (a)	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES.						
	At all ages (b)	Under 1 year (c)	1 and under 5 (d)	5 and under 15 (e)	15 and under 25 (f)	25 and under 65 (g)	65 and upwards (h)
BRENTWOOD DISTRICT ...	173	39	15	7	3	42	67
WICKFORD DISTRICT ...	66	19	7	4	3	17	16
WORKHOUSE	25	1	1	0	2	6	15
ASYLUM... ..	211	...	...	2	11	137	61
HACKNEY SCHOOL...	2	...	...	2	...	...	...
DAVENFORTH HILL SCHOOLS	2	...	...	2	...	...	...
TOTALS	479	59	23	17	19	202	159

Deaths from
Zymotic
Diseases.

The deaths from the eight principal zymotic diseases amounted to 40. They occurred 16 in the Wickford District, 1 in the Asylum, 1 in the Workhouse, and 22 in the Brentwood District. The 8 principal zymotic diseases are as follows, and with them is given the number of deaths they respectively caused, small-pox 0, scarlatina 0, diphtheria 3, typhoid fever 7, erysipelas 1, measles 15, and diarrhoea 14.

MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.

DISTRICT.	FEVERS.																								Total
	Smallpox	Scarlatina	Diphtheria	Membranous Group	5 Typhus	6 Enteric or Typhoid	7 Continued	8 Relapsing	9 Puerperal	10 Cholera	11 Erysipelas	12 Measles	13 Whooping Cough	14 Diarrhoea & Dysentery	15 Rheumatic Fever	16 Phthisis.	17 Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy	18 Heart Disease	19 Influenza	20 Injuries	21 All other Diseases	22			
BRENTWOOD	Under 5	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	6	...	...	7	...	2	1	21	39			
WICKFORD	3 upwards	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	...	1	1	7	6	12	10	6	78	134			
	Under 5	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	16	26			
WORKHOUSE	3 upwards	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	2	...	4	3	4	2	1	20	40			
	Under 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	5	1	1	1	2			
ASYLUM	3 upwards	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	13	23			
	Under 5	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	18	56	10	1	1	124	211			
HACKNEY SCHOOL	3 upwards	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	2			
	Under 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...			
DAVENTPORT HILL SCHOOL	3 upwards	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...			
	Under 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...			
TOTALS	3 upwards	...	3	...	...	7	...	...	1	...	1	15	...	14	1	33	72	31	17	10	274	479			

Consumption

Consumption caused 33 deaths, the large proportion of which were as usual in the Asylum. There were 3 in the Workhouse, 4 in the Wickford District, 7 in the Brentwood District, 1 in the Hackney School, and 18 in the Asylum.

Seventeen deaths were attributed to influenza.

Cancer.

Cancer caused 16 deaths, 7 females and 2 males in the Brentwood District, 3 females and 1 male in the Wickford District, 1 female and 1 male in the Workhouse, and 1 female in the Asylum—in all 12 females and 4 males.

Notification

Under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act 92 cases have been notified to me during the year. The below table will show their distribution.

LOCALITY.	Scarlatina	Typhoid Fever	Diphtheria	Erysipelas	Totals
GREAT BURSTEAD ...	1	1	1	1	4
WICKFORD	1	...	2	1	4
BRENTWOOD	4	13	2	4	23
SOUTH WEALD	11	4	2	3	20
HUTTON	11	...	..	2	13
HACKNEY SCHOOL ...	2	...	...	1	3
SHELFIELD	3	5	...	...	8
EAST HORNDON	...	...	1	...	1
ASYLUM	..	3	1	2	6
MOUNTNESSING	..	...	1	...	1
ST. CHARLES' SCHOOL	...	...	1	...	1
LAINDON	...	...	1	...	1
PITSEA	...	...	1	...	1
VANGE	...	2	...	...	2
INGRAVE	...	1	...	...	1
WORKHOUSE	...	...	...	2	2
BASILDON	...	...	...	1	1
TOTALS	33	29	13	17	92

From the above it will be seen that there were in the Brentwood District 66 cases, in the Wickford 13, in the Workhouse 2, in the Asylum 6, in the Hackney School 3, in St. Charles' School 1, and in the Davenport Hill School 1.

NUMBER OF SUCH CASES REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES FOR TREATMENT IN ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

DISTRICT.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Typhoid.
BRENTWOOD	16	1	10
WICKFORD	1		2
TOTAL	17	1	12

Influenza was very prevalent in January, February, and March, and after a lull in April, broke out again in May, and chest complications were very common.

Influenza.

A severe epidemic of Measles broke out in February, and continued through March and April, and every parish in the Union was affected. The epidemic began in the west and gradually extended to the east and south, school after school in the line of march being closed, and very few families where the children were attending these schools escaped. The cases were, however, of a mild type, and only 15 deaths resulted.

Measles.

The school known as the Davenport Hill School at Prospect House, Shenfield—one of the schools under the London School Board—was the subject of a very extensive outbreak of illness in August and September, and two deaths resulted. In all there were 56 children ill out of a total of 96.

The Davenport
Hill School

The symptoms varied a good deal in intensity, but were generally a feeling of indisposition, with aching of the limbs and head—and some gastric disturbance and more or less fever with constipation. The fever did not as a rule run high, but the headache in the more severe cases was very intense, and attended with injection of the conjunctiva and delirium. In all the

more severe cases that I examined there was also congestion of the lungs. The duration of the attack was in the large majority of cases only a few days—in many only two or three. There was diarrhœa in only two cases and that of short duration. In several of the cases there was abdominal distension. My opinion, as stated at the time, was that these were simply cases of “heat stroke,” and that they were caused by the excessive and long-continued heat with no great difference in the night and day temperature, and the insanitary conditions under which the children lived, the overcrowded, badly ventilated dormitories, being the more active factor.

The house is badly situated for the purposes of a school—it has a hill as high as the house itself close on to it—only a few feet away. It is in a hole and very shut in by trees and houses, and has no air space round. The dormitories were overcrowded and badly ventilated, and are otherwise badly constructed. The schoolroom and workshops are badly ventilated and lighted, and the playground, which is asphalted and small, is comprised in a triangle, bounded by the school, the hill, and the workshops. There were also faults of drainage and other matters.

The Hospital accommodation is insufficient, and the so-called Hospital wholly inadequate and unfit for the purpose for which it is used. It was reported on unfavourably by me in April, 1897, in reference to an outbreak of Scarlatina, but nothing resulted.

In August of the same year, in consequence of a further outbreak, the matter was brought under the notice of the School Board for London, and, as a result, one of the recommendations—the provision of an Isolation Hospital—was adopted, and a building for that purpose was put up early in 1898. Nothing, however, was done to the Hospital itself, though I considered the alterations suggested so necessary that I advised the Sanitary Authority to “close this building as a Hospital” if they were not carried out.

I am of opinion that no amount of alteration can make this a proper place for a school, and especially for a school for children such as are sent here, drafted as they are from the waifs and strays of the London streets. Hereditary disease is stamped on the faces and figures of many of them, and the standard of health of all of them taken as a whole must be a low one. For this reason their sanitary surroundings should be of the best.

The children were all removed to Margate at the end of September and are still there.

The school has been visited by Professor W. R. Smith, the Medical Officer to the London School Board, and has been reported on by him.

The epidemic was certainly not Typhoid—it bore no resemblance to it—but a case of Typhoid was reported to me in October in this school in the person of a nurse who had been looking after these boys in the Hospital, and I gather from the report of Professor W. R. Smith—kindly forwarded by him to me—that the other nurse who was employed here and a boy who had been in hospital for a fortnight or more, were both ill with Typhoid after their removal, the one to London, and the other to Margate. These cases were not reported to me by the Medical Officers of Health into whose districts they were moved. The cases occurred in October and November, at the same time as the other cases of Typhoid in the special drainage district of the parishes of Brentwood, Shenfield, and South Weald, and considering the insanitary conditions of the school generally, and the Hospital, in particular, the only matter for surprise is that the disease was limited to three cases.

With the exception of the two nurses there was no case of illness among the staff of the School, who, except that they had better quarters, were living under the same conditions as the boys—the same milk, meat, water, and food generally.

I saw many of these boys and their cases differed in no way from many in my own practice that were undoubtedly cases of sun or heat stroke. On the advent of cooler weather the number of new cases rapidly fell and soon ceased altogether.

Thirty-three cases of scarlatina were notified, 2 in the Wickford and 31 in the Brentwood District.

Scarlatina.

Of those in the Brentwood District, Brentwood claimed 4, South Weald 11, Hutton 11, Hackney Schools 2, and Shenfield 3. They were spread over nine months, and at no time did the disease assume anything like epidemic proportions. The 11 cases in Hutton were spread over four months, and five of the cases were in one family. The 11 cases in South Weald were spread over five months, four of these cases also being in one family.

Diphtheria.

Of the 13 cases of diphtheria, five occurred in the Wickford District, two of which were in Wickford itself, and one each in Great Burstead, Pitsea, and Laindon. The two cases in Wickford were in one family and the surroundings were bad, the Pitsea case was imported, the Laindon case was contracted from a visitor, and in the case at Great Burstead the sanitary surroundings were not quite satisfactory, though no definite cause could be ascertained.

Eight cases occurred in the Brentwood District. Of these two were in Brentwood, two in South Weald, and one each in East Horndon, Mountnessing, the Asylum, and St. Charles' School.

In five of these cases the sanitary surroundings were good, in two not quite satisfactory, and in the other case bad. In one of the cases the disease was contracted away from home, and in the case of St. Charles' School a boy was sent to the school with a sore throat and the boy who fell ill with diphtheria was his constant companion. The case in the Asylum was servant to the Medical Officer, and may have contracted the disease outside the Asylum. There was no second case in any family.

There were 29 cases of Typhoid Fever notified during the year. Of these, 3 occurred in the Wickford District, in the parishes of Vange 2 and Great Burstead 1, and 26 in the Brentwood District; in the parishes of Brentwood 13, 1 imported; Shenfield 6, 1 imported; Mountnessing 1, Ingrave 1, South Weald 2, and the Asylum 3. Typhoid Fever.

Nineteen cases of the above were in the Brentwood, South Weald, and Shenfield Special Drainage District. Three cases in one family, in Coptford Road, occurred in March and April; 1 in May in the Convent; 1 in September in Crown Street, an imported case which died in a few days; and 14 cases in October and November. In these two months 10 houses were infected, 1 each in Tower Hill, Myrtle Road, Moore's Place, Essie Villas, Crescent Road, Prospect House, Victoria Road, and High Street, and 2 houses in Railway Square. To the right of the road leading from the Station to the Grammar School, and including Rose Valley and the Cornsland Estate, there was only the one case in Prospect House; in the Ongar Road, where the drains have often been complained of, there were no cases. That part of the town between the Queen's Road and the High Street, down to and including the Westbury Road, was also free, with the exception of the one case in Moore's Place.

The milk was supplied by eight different dairymen, so that there can be no question as to its not being caused by infected milk. I am very strongly of opinion that the long-continued dry weather was the cause of these sporadic outbreaks; that many traps became dry, and in this way allowed sewer gas to escape. In addition to these cases there were three others in the parish of Shenfield, two in Sawyer's Lane in the same house, and one, an imported case, below the Green Dragon Inn. I could find no cause for the outbreak in Sawyer's Lane. One case was ill some time before the other, and very probably the second case may have contracted the disease by direct infection.

The water supply in all cases was from Grays. In some cases there were cisterns, and in two or three these cisterns were open or only loosely covered by boards. Where the supply is constant as it is at Brentwood, I think water should always be taken from the pipe in preference to a cistern, but if from a cistern, then it should always be covered in by a closely fitting metal top.

In both the cases at Vange there were faulty sanitary conditions, quite sufficient to account for the disease. In one a defective water pipe, leading directly into the drain, passed only a few inches from a bedroom window that was constantly open, and thus acted as a ventilator of the sewer into the house.

With regard to the infection of Typhoid, it must always be borne in mind that it is a disease easily contracted, and that there are other causes besides faulty sanitary conditions about a house—a chance drink of bad water or infected milk is quite sufficient, and this may easily happen to anyone away from his own home.

The District
Hospital.

The District Hospital has been occupied 344 days. It was closed a fortnight for the nurse's holiday.

Seventeen cases of scarlatina, 12 of typhoid fever, and one of diphtheria have been admitted.

The work with the typhoid cases was very heavy, they were of a very severe type and there were two deaths. In consequence of the inability to obtain assistance in the housework and washing—no one will come near a “fever hospital”—I had to engage a trained nurse at two guineas a week to help in the nursing. She was with us nine weeks.

I have asked the Sanitary Authority to put up a cottage in the Hospital grounds and engage a couple to assist in the work of the Hospital, the man to work in the garden and to do all the errands and the wife to assist in the housework and do the washing. I think such a couple could be got for £40 a year, and the sum

that we have paid every year for assistance in nursing would go a very long way towards paying for this. I hope this year the Authority will be able to make this addition, it would be a great gain to the Hospital and would make it complete in itself.

Slyce's Gate water supply has again received considerable attention. The matter was handed over from the District to the Parish Council and several meetings have been held. During the long-continued drought of last summer there was very great distress in this part of the district from want of water.

Slyce Gate
Water Supply.

At the end of 1897 the matter stood that the District Council had made an offer for a field on the Bell Hill, subject to a satisfactory supply of water being found there. In the spring of 1898 borings were made, and subsequently a reservoir was dug, and an ample supply of water of good quality obtained.

It is probable that there will be a considerable amount of surplus water which would be available for public purposes in Billericay, the payment for which would materially lessen the rate which would have to be paid by the parish. I think the work could be carried out for a £1,000, and that after certain water rents had been collected, a penny rate would more than cover the cost that would fall on the parish.

Dr. Thresh, the County Medical Officer of Health, has inspected the source of supply and the District to be supplied, and is of opinion that the supply is an ample one, and more than sufficient for the requirements of Slyce Gate and South Green.

In many other parts of the District there has been great scarcity of water — Crays Hill, especially, has had a very deficient supply, and part of Little Warley has also suffered. At the latter place a well has been sunk on the Common, and the supply promises to be sufficient. At Crays Hill, the taking over of the old parish pump by the District Council, and the deepening

ing of the well as was done at Wickford, will provide a good supply. This work should be carried out at once.

Vange, Pitsea, and Bowers have also been suffering from want of water—the deep well at Pitsea being quite unequal to the demand. In Vange, the new houses get their supply from the roofs and from Mrs. Curtis's well, which is more than a mile from many of the houses.

Water Supply
to Vange, Pitsea
and Bowers.

The Southend Water Company obtained a Bill in the last session of Parliament allowing them to sink deep wells in the parishes of Bowers and Fobbing. The main must of necessity come through the parishes of Vange, Pitsea, and Bowers, and the Bill was opposed by these parishes because the Company refused to supply them with water. Terms were, however, come to, and the Company has agreed with the Sanitary Authority to supply water at a cost of 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, so soon as they are drawing water from the district.

The Drainage
to Billericay.

The question of some system of drainage for Billericay has been under consideration from time to time for some years, and a considerable part of the town has been sewered, but other parts are quite unprovided for by any system, and where there are sewers, they discharge into the nearest ditch, and there constitute nuisances of a more or less serious character. In consequence, a sanitary engineer was engaged to send in a plan for sewerage of the town. The plan was referred from the District to the Parish Council, and was by them condemned as being too costly. Some smaller and less expensive plans have been under consideration, but as yet nothing has been decided on. In many places the nuisances are serious, and steps should be taken to remedy them without delay.

Inspection.

The usual routine work of inspection of various kinds has been gone through and any faulty conditions

have been remedied. There is as a rule little fault to be found now—those concerned being well up to the requirements of the Sanitary Acts.

The rainfall amounted to 17·51 inches. This is about 73 per cent. of the average. From August 8 to September 28 only 0·41 inches fell. During the month of September only 0·22 inches fell. October was the wettest month, with a rainfall of 2·74 inches.*

Rainfall.

The number of vagrants admitted into the Union-house during the year

1875	was	464
1885	„	3,362
1895	„	5,383
1898	„	6,787

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

FRED. CARTER, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health Billericay R.S.A.

* From observations by Colonel Branfill.

